



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Our ref:** RFI 6187  
**Date:** 13 February 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: TB statistics and Badger Vaccination**

Thank you for your request for information about TB statistics and badger vaccination, which we received on 20 January. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs). We apologise the delay in getting this response to you.

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Your questions and the responses are below.

***1) I understand you are tweeting that 99 cattle per day were slaughtered during 2012 because of bTB. Please could you give the statistic for 2013? There is a chance bTB was falling before the cull and it would be good to have some accurate numbers if, indeed, Defra can provide accuracy given the computer 'error' discovered.***

In 2012 there were 28,096 cattle slaughtered as reactors or dangerous contacts in England and 37,734 in Great Britain. This works out at an average of 77.0 cattle per day in England and 103.4 in Great Britain.

In 2013 there have been 22,101 cattle slaughtered as reactors or dangerous contacts between January and October inclusive in England and 27,474 in Great Britain. This works out at an average of 72.7 cattle slaughtered per day in England and 90.4 in Great Britain.

These and more detailed statistics can be found at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/incidence-of-tuberculosis-tb-in-cattle-in-great-britain>

Cattle slaughtered statistics were not affected by the computer error referred to above, and this was stated on the publication.

***2) Wales have vaccinated 1,424 badgers over 288 square KM for £943,000 - Defra have killed 1,861 badgers over 561 square KM for approximately £8.1million (and rising). Would it now not be the more efficient and sustainable method of wildlife control to follow Wales example? If not, why not?***

Badger culling, badger vaccination, and on-farm biosecurity measures are part of a package of measures to address the risk of TB from badgers.

Scientific evidence from the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) indicated that proactive badger culling, done on a large enough geographical scale, in a widespread, coordinated and efficient way, and over a sustained period of time (at least four years), is likely to reduce the incidence of bovine TB in cattle in high incidence areas.

It should be noted that the badger vaccine is not totally effective and vaccination does not cure infected badgers which will continue to form a reservoir of the disease. Annual trapping and vaccination programmes are needed to maintain immunity in the population and unlike culling it is not known what effect badger vaccination has on TB in cattle; while it is reasonable to expect vaccination of badgers to reduce the incidence of TB in cattle in high incidence areas, no trial has been conducted to assess the magnitude and timing of these effects.

Defra envisages a role for both badger culling and badger vaccination as part of a comprehensive and balanced package of measures to tackle TB in cattle. Some farmers and landowners prefer to use vaccination to reduce the prevalence of TB infection in badger and licences to vaccinate badgers are available. Other farmers prefer the option of badger culling and therefore both options have been made available.

There are no quick or easy ways of reducing TB transmission between badgers and cattle. The benefits of any intervention will take a great deal of time to materialise. It is important to act now, before the disease situation which is critical in parts of England becomes even worse.

The Welsh Government was responsible for the deciding on the vaccination policy in Wales. Any queries relating to their policy and the reasoning behind it should be directed to the Welsh Government.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

I have attached an annex giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Defra TB Programme**

**Email:** [ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk)

## Annex

### Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (email: [requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk)) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF